

Richard O. Belden (Dick)

Biography

Deputy House Minority Leader at Large, Richard O. Belden of Shelton was first elected to the House of Representatives from the 113th Assembly District in 1974. He has been re-elected every two years since and is currently the longest continuously serving member in the history of the House (the Dean of the House.)

Representative Belden has a long history of leadership within his caucus and is widely respected by both sides of the political aisle particularly for his length of service, knowledge of the legislative process, expertise in parliamentary procedure and broad understanding of the issues.

Representative Belden was appointed an Assistant House Republican Leader in 1981 and 1983 and served as Deputy Speaker of the House in the 1985 and 1986 sessions. In 1987, he was appointed Deputy Republican Leader. Since 1993, he has been the Deputy House Republican Leader-at-Large and as the Ranking Member of the Finance, Revenue and Bonding Committee. For the 2005-2006 term he has also been re-appointed to serve on the Labor and Public Employee Committee, and will continue his service as a member of the legislature's Legislative Management Committee.

Representative Belden also serves with the Governor, constitutional officers and other legislative leaders as a member of the powerful State Bond Commission, which oversees the allocation of hundreds of millions of dollars in bond monies each year for state funded projects. Additionally, he has served as the Director and Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Connecticut Institute of Municipal Studies and a Director of the Connecticut Resources Recovery Authority.

Representative Belden is a committed fiscal conservative, and has consistently used his office and appointed positions to fight wasteful government spending and control Connecticut's bonded debt. He is a strong advocate for using state surpluses to reduce state borrowing. In 1998, an amendment he offered on the House floor, and his spirited plea to his colleagues, closed a major loophole in the state's anti-drunk driving laws making it more difficult for individuals caught driving drunk to escape prosecution. Rep. Belden is a strong supporter of open space acquisition. Rep. Belden has been a proponent of improving the state's infrastructure, which included UConn 2000. He was an initial sponsor of UConn 2000.

A lifelong resident of Shelton, Representative Belden is a 1953 graduate of the Shelton school system. He served his country in the U.S. Air Force from 1955 to 1961. In 1999, Rep. Belden retired from Sikorsky Aircraft after 38 years of employment. While at Sikorsky, he served in numerous management positions, the most current being Sikorsky's Ombudsman and Real Estate Manager.

Representative Belden has been a member of the Shelton Republican Town Committee since 1964. He served on the Shelton Board of Apportionment and Taxation from 1967 to

1971, on the Board of Alderman from 1972-1973. He has been a member of various Shelton Building Committees, overseeing construction of a library addition, a new high school and the senior citizen center.

A trustee of St. Margaret Mary Church since 1978, Representative Belden also served on the Parish Council from 1975 to 1978. He is a corporator of Griffin Hospital, Parent Child Resource Center, the Birmingham Group and the Lower Naugatuck Valley Boys and Girls Club, and long time former corporator of Hewitt Memorial Hospital. He is a Co-Chairman of the Valley Substance Abuse Council and a member of the advisory board at the Emmett O'Brien Regional Vocational-Technical School. Rep. Belden is also a member of the American Legion Post 16.

Shelton native, Rep. Belden will be celebrating his 72nd birthday this year. He has been married to the former Bertha M. Kurtyka since 1956.